DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 021 912 UD 005 358

By- Hayes, Harry
SOME WAYS TO TEACH CULTURALLY DEPRIVED CHILDREN.
Pub Date Feb 64
Note- 5p.
Journal Cit- Chicago Schools Journal; v45 Feb 1964
EDRS Price MF- $0.25 HC- $0.28
Descriptors- CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED, *DISADVANTAGED YOUTH, *ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, *LEARNING ACTIVITIES, PARENT PARTICIPATION, PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES, *TEACHING METHODS

Outlined is a typical routine for presenting lessons to culturally disadvantaged elementary school students, who seem to require highly structured, immediate, and concrete activities and material. It is felt that teachers need to develop and use a range of visual, manipulable learning devices, and to acquire an understanding of the background and the educability of these children by reading the professional literature. Parent-teacher conferences accompanied by lesson demonstrations, field trips with parental cooperation, audiovisual techniques, and a classroom store are successful methods for presenting education favorably to disadvantaged pupils and their families. (NH)

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

05358

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Some Ways to Teach Culturally Deprived Children

UD 005 358
ED021912

Experience, Skill Produce Workable Techniques

● *Harry Hayes*

This article offers no panacea for the educational problems of culturally deprived children. Rather, it describes how one teacher responds to the difficulties inherent in the conflict between the values and attitudes of culturally deprived children and the aims of the school. It is not a "scientific" presentation; there is not a statistic in the article. There are no "new" techniques presented, nor is any claim made by the author of novelty or originality. The chief value of the article lies in its emphasis upon the importance of thoughtful, sensitive, vital teacher participation in the learning activities of children. Mr. Hayes teaches fourth grade at the Bass elementary school.

Problems caused by poverty, discrimination, unemployment, lack of motivation, and individual differences among children sometimes appear so overwhelming that an article on learning experiences for culturally deprived children seems presumptuous, even preposterous, as if a bright sprinkling of journalistic optimism could cure all the world's (or the classroom's) ills with a glibly turned phrase or a self-righteously intoned pronouncement. But no matter the degree of cultural deprivation within a single classroom or a whole school district, certain teaching and learning methods and attitudes are often more efficient than others. Teaching recipes guarantee nothing. The cook is all-important. But a few suggestions can at least serve as a point of departure for the beginning teacher or as a yardstick for the more experienced teacher.

Suppose you, a teacher of the fourth grade in a school in a culturally deprived area, decided to invest your teaching energies heavily in the teaching of reading — in trying to raise some of those below-grade-level reading scores — because you agreed that reading skills were the most important learning tool available to any child. You would very likely find, upon examination, that most of your pupils had reading scores one, two, or even three years below 4.0. A few would have fourth grade reading scores; perhaps one or two would have scores above 4.0. You might consider grouping your class on three ability levels. But from your last few years' experience you might realize that this is a very difficult maneuver, producing only limited success and considerable dissatisfaction and frustration for the effort involved just in getting started. Just how many

February, 1964 Vol. 45
copyright, Board of Education, City of Chicago.

UD 005 358

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Chicago Bd. of Education, Ill.
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

"enriching activities" can you originate and administer from material somewhat inappropriate in the first place? Certainly you could evolve something better. So you decide to work things out as they come up. You begin in September by teaching the whole class as a single group and spending as much time as seems necessary on social training — developing generally acceptable social behavior — the most basic and important learning experience for any child, but more particularly so for the culturally deprived child, who must learn in the classroom what he did not learn at his mother's knee.

Structured Activities Provide Security

Rules and routines about playing, talking, toys, pencils, classroom traffic, fighting, candy and gum, paying attention, coming directly to the seat every morning when the room lines pass in at 8:55, folding three sheets of arithmetic paper the same way every morning, printing a heading in exactly the same way every morning, reading and working the arithmetic assignment posted on the blackboard in exactly the same way in exactly the same place every morning, moving by rows to carry out necessary routines — all these standard operating procedures have (hopefully) established or conveyed a certain structure and order that provide the feeling and experience of security that these children need and demand in their lives. So strong is their attachment to structured activities (arithmetic computation, for example) that any interruption is resented. Movement to another subject area or activity or even to a training lesson highly pertinent to the present activity is an unwelcome interruption.

But you had planned to work especially hard on reading. You've been reviewing letter sounds alphabetically with the help of the first record in *The Sound Way To Easy Reading*.[1] Each child receives a copy of "The Sound Dictionary," a printed version of what is on the record, at the start of the reading lesson. This gives him something to hold and to look at, an object, concrete and tangible, upon which to focus his attention. He hears from the phonograph and speaks sounds and words represented by the letters he reads on the paper he is holding. A child up at the front of the room points with a pointer to the large letters on the writing chart so that anyone who looks away from his own paper is reminded of the place. And while the record is playing you ride herd on the "noisers" and "drifters" whose lack of social training demands continuous attention.

During another reading lesson you continue to work ahead in the basic reader. You do follow the standard directions in the teacher's edition. But any sort of discussion is limited to two or three question-and-answer exchanges. Discussions are vicarious and are confined to one participant at a time, whose reactions cannot very well be anticipated and thus not completely trusted by the other children, often because of projected self-dislike and discontent in their adjustment to a difficult environment. Culturally deprived children seem to trust and focus best upon the immediate and material experience. After stories in the basic reader are read, accompanying workbook pages are written, by those who were able to buy workbooks. The highest third of the class in reading is introduced to several more demanding or interesting stories in supplementary readers. The lowest third has several extra sessions with the sound dictionary. Soon most children can remember the letter and letter-combination sounds. You find that, although you are not neglecting the fine arts, you are spending much class time teaching the five R's, including responsibility and respect for self and others. You begin to develop a sense of timing for garnishments of praise and for dashes of righteous anger.

[1]Bremner Davis Phonics, Wilmette, Ill.

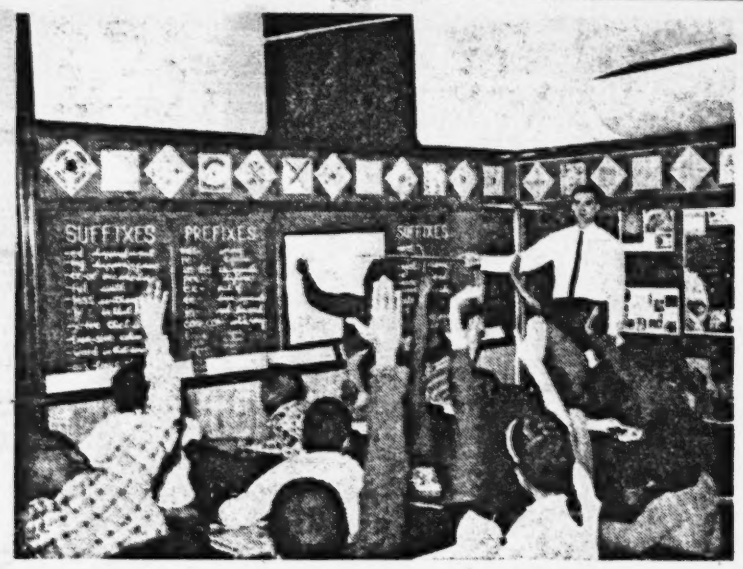
Attention Necessary For Formal Lessons

Many children are at least trying to pay attention, so that you can devote somewhat less energy to social training and attempt a formal lesson. Prefixes and suffixes seem a good starting point. Sight vocabularies are generally fair; *structural* analysis might be easy for such "kinesthetic-minded" children to grasp, and it just might offer a beginning for independent reading. After spending the time and effort necessary to gain everyone's complete attention (tapping on the blackboard with a pointer, repeating individuals' names), you briefly explain what prefixes and suffixes are: groups of letters or parts added to the front or back of a word, like an engine or a caboose on a train. Then you place the word "learn" in a pocket chart. You say you can change the meaning of this word everybody knows (What is it?) by adding a part to the back of it like a caboose. As you insert after "learn" a small piece of tagboard with "ing" printed in red, you explain that the [illegible] ing at a different word.

After the appropriate teaching and learning questions and answers (Certainly you recognize only those well-mannered children with their hands raised) you might explain and insert more suffixes in red and several prefixes printed on tag board with a blue marking pen. Then you might repeat the explanation and call upon a few of the "noisers" and "drifters" by name to supply words and moves as you re-explain and re-demonstrate the meanings of several prefixes and suffixes. Next you might call upon some individual to come up to the board and "make" a word that means "to learn now," and, as the lesson progresses, "to learn in the past" and "to learn again" and "to do the opposite of learn."

Support Verbal Learning With Material Experience

If you have been investing your available energy in preparing this lesson, you might have two large charts ready with common suffixes and their meanings printed clearly on one and common prefixes and their meanings on the other. After you once more repeat the concept of prefixes and suffixes, you might show that all the meanings and spellings are organized on the two charts. After giving directions for a written exercise on this lesson (twenty simple definitions written on the blackboard), you would distribute paper, make sure everyone began writing, and help when and where necessary. As soon as possible after the papers were collected, you would have the children correct the twenty exercises orally so that the



Pupils practice word-building

whole lesson on prefixes and suffixes would become one continuous, immediate learning experience in which the material is linked directly to the verbal.

If the lesson has been even modestly successful, it is at least partly due to the fact that you have been quite calculating in gauging the "learning mood" of the children. When the sky is heavily overcast and the barometer is falling, when a holiday is coming, when the children are fatigued or overly excited because of some neighborhood or classroom incident—when any catalyst releases and reduces their already short attention span—a written review of some previously learned concept or skill may be the only possible learning experience.

When investments of time and effort in formal lessons are possible with culturally deprived children, that kind of learning experience (like the lesson on prefixes and suffixes) usually takes this format:

1. Time and effort invested to get everyone's complete attention.
2. A brief and general verbal introduction and explanation by the teacher.
3. Demonstration by the teacher with some device or model of the concept involved.
4. Repetition of this demonstration, especially with several "noisers" and "drifters" called upon by name to supply words and moves.
5. Verbal explanation by the teacher of how children can manipulate the learning device.
6. Calling upon volunteers to manipulate the model to correspond with the teacher's repeated verbal explanation.
7. Summarizing repetition of the explanation and demonstration by the teacher.
8. Explanation and assignment of a written exercise involving the concept just taught.
9. Oral correction of the written assignment as soon as possible after papers are collected.
10. Repetition: reteaching, rewriting, re-reciting whenever possible.

Visible, Tangible Appeal to Children

The previously noted preference of culturally deprived children for real, concrete, tangible ways of learning indicates that teachers of such children should develop and maintain a large collection of learning devices which can be seen and manipulated.

A large flannelboard (about 40 x 30") with the flannel stretched over a sheet of steel is a most useful classroom aid. Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division can be demonstrated with objects (apples, fish, balls) of cardboard with small magnets taped on back (kits available commercially), and with two-inch felt numbers. A set of two-inch felt letters can be used to teach simple phonics rules. With the proper set of such letters, the class can be taught to play scrabble. (Members of each team pick letters in turn or pass their turns to teammates, who can form words with any of the letters already picked). Individual decks of arithmetic facts flash cards (at 29c) are excellent for drill and review at desks, especially for learning multiplication tables.

A place-value board with brightly colored buttons on wires makes an excellent kinesthetic device for teaching place values and names at many levels. A few individuals may profitably use sets of two-inch letters cut from cardboard to see and feel the letters in spelling words. Perhaps you could devise some way children could make a large cardboard relief map of the United States, with removable states so a jigsaw puzzle activity would be available for social studies. By using cardboard and "felt" objects to convey abstract ideas, children can literally grasp, handle, and feel nonmaterial concepts.

Professional Reading Aids the Teacher

But even considering these kinesthetic devices and their use assumes much of the classroom teacher. Mate-

[illegible] "attention getting" consume much energy, to say nothing of the actual teaching of the lesson. How would any teacher, apprentice or journeyman, develop and maintain the necessary positive attitude? By sharing it. By talking a little "shop" with a few kindred spirits now and them. But most effectively by reading. Frank Riessman's *The Culturally Deprived Child* is an important study that relates social backgrounds and attitudes to educational possibilities. Riessman himself suggests reading *The Teacher* by Sylvia Ashton Warner and other works like *The Cool World* by Warren Miller. A. Harry Passow's *Education in Depressed Areas* is a rather general, all-inclusive work that may be of some help to the classroom teacher up front on the firing line. *The Saturday Evening Post* of April 14, 1962, featured an excellent article on the Banneker School District of East St. Louis. Many professional journals and popular magazines carry articles dealing with problems and successes in teaching culturally deprived children. Seeking out and reading such materials can be a source of strength and renewal to the teacher who faces daily the difficult task of teaching the culturally deprived

Another source of strength for the teacher lies in the parents of the children he teaches. Parents are, despite any claims or feelings to the contrary, the natural allies of the teacher. If they can come to understand and accept the procedures and standards of the school and the classroom, they will, as is proper and natural, bolster and support the teacher's efforts toward the education of their children.

Meetings With Parents Develop Cooperation

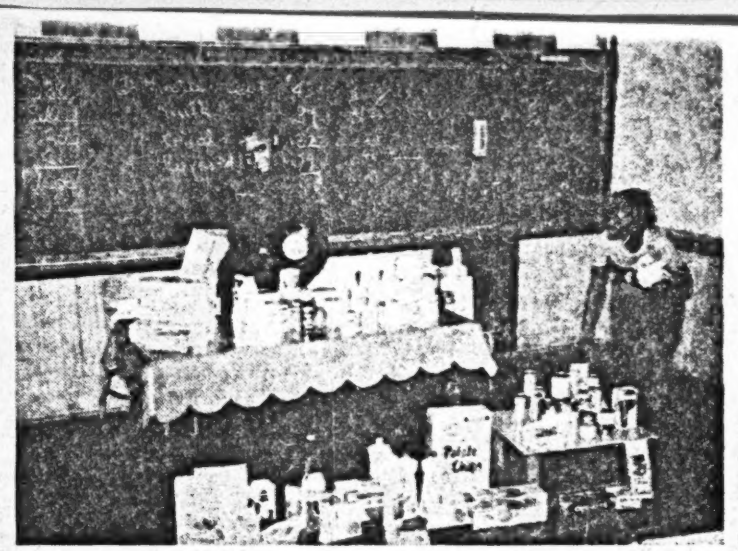
Parents' meetings early in the semester have had considerable success in both East St. Louis and Chicago. Suppose you plan a parents' meeting right in your classroom for the third week in September. You hope to show the parents exactly what you are doing and how you are doing it. You seek to gain their understanding and cooperation, especially in maintaining the prerequisite classroom discipline. You plan to demonstrate a reading lesson and an arithmetic lesson, among other things. You hope to discuss homework, classroom behavior, curriculum, even the possibility of class field trips, and to answer their questions as you go along. Planning and preparing for this parents' meeting gives children an immediate goal after the solemnity and novelty of the first weeks of school have worn off. You feel the effort involved in all this will be well spent if you can talk with the parents for a while and gain their cooperation.

Several dittoed letters inform and remind most parents; a few phone calls reach those who haven't signed and returned the letters. Usually at least one parent of about three-fourths of the children, thirty or more adults, attend the meeting. The lesson demonstrations proceed fairly well. You continue with a few words about your methods and objectives in general, and about topical units in the course of study in particular. Now the parents have some information upon which to base their questions. You answer a few about the value of homework (assigned every night, done in a special place at a set time, excellent review for that day's lesson), or about paying for workbooks or for *The Weekly Reader*, or about how a particular child might be helped with reading or arithmetic (Read aloud, flash cards. Do you check his homework?, Does he have a library card?, Does he receive books as gifts on birthdays and at Christmas?). You try to emphasize the learning possibilities in the "total effect" of home and classroom, parent and teacher, books and activities.

You stress to the parents the value to their children of such programs as individual reading of books in the classroom library and of such activities as field trips. You solicit their cooperation in developing good habits of behavior, self-discipline, and respect for books and materials essential to the successful use of the room library. Even though attempts to lead children to read books in the classroom library aren't always successful, the approach acquaints more children with more books, creates more interest in reading, and probably improves general reading ability more than any other classroom activity.

Planning Essential For Field Trips

Field trips offer great educational value, although they make great demands on teacher, pupils, and parents. Very often a class of children isn't trained to listen and learn attentively, to use the library, or even to walk in an orderly line until very late in the semester, if at all. But the possibility of a field trip puts another goal and privilege at the teacher's disposal. Most parents are willing and able to pay the thirty-five cents bus fare for a class trip lasting from 9:15 until noon. Experience *is* the best teacher. No need to resort to pedagese to convey the value of field trips. But again, so much depends upon the cook and the ingredients. Would several parents be willing to make the trips possible by accompanying the class on each trip? If so, one experimental trip might be planned for the second week in October.



Store provides realistic arithmetic practice

Rehearsing the children for a fire drill makes a good behavior practice and test for a trip. Several simple rules for trip manners should be proclaimed, discussed, publicized, repeated, and practiced. At first, only the most structured trips with guides should be attempted. The Chicago Historical Society and the Chicago Museum of Natural History offer superbly structured and guided field trips appropriate in many areas. Teacher and parents can concentrate upon maintaining order and attention.

Securing parental cooperation and help on field trips is only one of the many benefits to be derived from the establishment of good parent-teacher relationships. The most important product of parent-teacher rapport is to build in the child a sense of unity and relatedness, a feeling that the school and the home are related and mutually supporting parts of his life.

Listening, Performing Both Aid Learning

Films, slides, and special television programs obviously have an important function in extending the experience of culturally deprived children. They should be used frequently and wisely. Listening regularly to an FM radio program like "Uncle Dan From Froggy Hollow Farm" provides a worthwhile learning experience for culturally deprived children. Listening to stories, especially fairy tales and animal stories, often has a calming effect upon children. Listening tests of about four questions measure comprehension of these stories. Yes, educational games like spelling baseball, arithmetic relay, and scrabble, and art work too, are fine learning experiences. But the rub lies in learning and following directions.

Suppose you've been saving emptied and cleaned cans and packages for a classroom store. After you've set up your wares on a table or even on the

floor, you must carefully explain that everyone has something to do, although only one child at a time does the "shopping." One child selects four items. He carries them over to the blackboard. There he begins writing the names of the articles in one column and the prices (as marked) in another column. Children at their seats are copying the names and prices on lined paper. After the child at the board finishes listing his purchases, another "storekeeper" might calculate the total and the change from five dollars. Perhaps you might use play money in the transaction. After two or three more children do their shopping and blackboard work, closing time will have arrived because excitable natures and short attention spans have begun to overtake constructive learning. After two or three days the store should be stored away for a while. Perhaps with Bell Telephone's teletraining apparatus (two phones and a switchboard) you could elaborate your "shopping" and broaden the learning experience. But games like scrabble and spelling baseball and "Do It" (whispering to a teammate written directions for simple actions) are more competetive; rules and directions must be repeated often.

Sense of Belonging Can Change Behavior

Granted that interesting pictures on well-planned bulletin boards are desirable, how do you persuade action-minded children that bulletin boards are to be looked at, not demolished? You might have a few of the more "active" boys help you post the pictures; you might have other children help make the letters and other figures. You might talk a bit about "keeping *our* bulletin board looking just this way because it makes *our* room look so nice." You might relate a short tale about the sign in the Mexican pottery shop: "*Tocar con sus ojos,*" "Touch with your eyes," and use this as a reminder when destruction threatens. You might repeat these admonitions about being careful with any school property "because we want it to help us learn," whenever your audience seems in need of your performance, whenever they need to be reminded of their stake in the existing social order.

Wise teachers realize that, in one sense, their function is to "sell" education to their pupils. Shrewd teachers usually find ways to dramatize their "pitch." One way to dramatize is through the use of ceremony. You might ask the principal or his assistant to hand out report cards and give special praise to "Honor Roll" and "Much Improved" cards. You might have a science notebook contest. If you could acquire a few books somewhere, you might award them as prizes, since you know that what is earned, not merely given, is most highly valued and that public praise and encouragement are great incentives to pupils. You might seek to attract student teachers because they contribute enthusiasm and variety to a classroom. Inwardly, while defining limits and organizing freedoms with the children, you might even recognize various positive qualities (kinesthesia, vitality, the art of enjoyment) often considered lacking in our much criticized culture.

As a practising idealist you might do many, many things because you believe that resources concentrated effectively in the elementary classroom are one of our best hopes for social and educational improvement.